

BOM

A Belgian J-Culture Magazine

Nr 10: January - February 2013

Interviews

Sayaconcept

Rose Noire

We're All Mad Here

Fashion

Kodona

Lolita

the **Gazette**

Exclusive interview

+ Choose the cover with your
favourite member of the Gazette

HYPER JAPAN
Japan Expo
Belgium

5th anniversary
of Râmen Events

BCM

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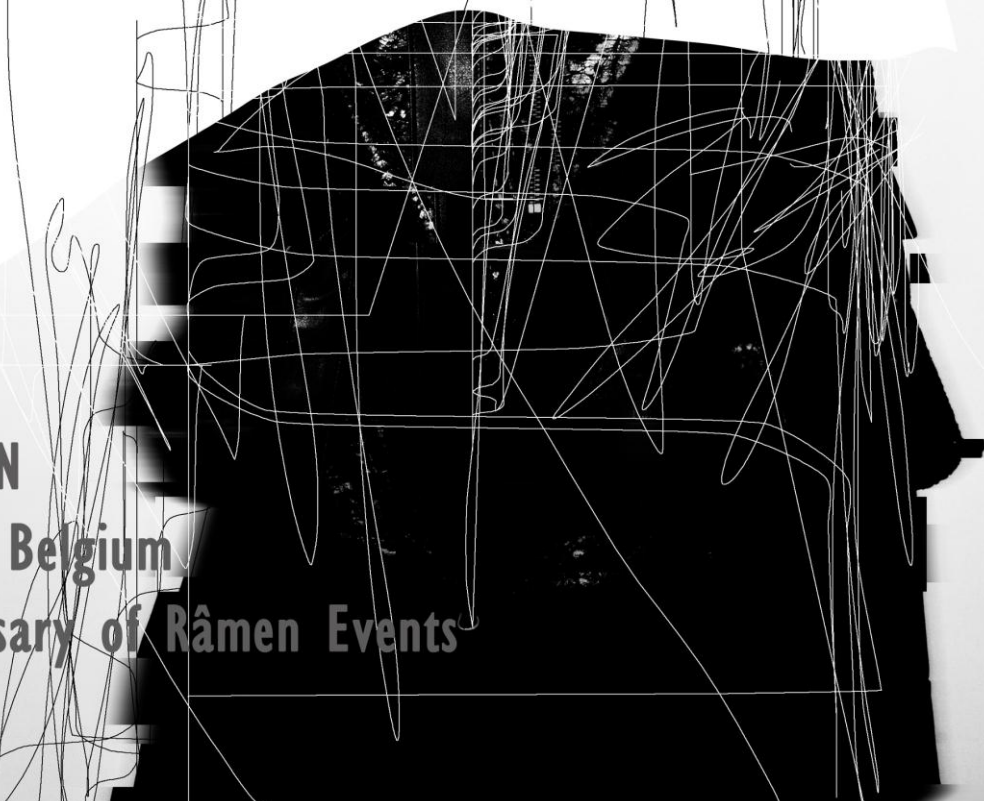
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of 2013 of BCM! Or better said: happy holidays and a happy new year, seeing that this edition is released on Christmas Eve. Just in time to print it and take it along to (boring) holiday festivities and keep yourself occupied reading.

We've done something a little different for our cover this year by way of holiday present to our readers. Instead of just one cover we've got 5 so you can pick and choose which one you like best, featuring your favourite member of the Gazette, of which singer RUKI was kind enough to give us an interview over mail a while back. Or you can print all or several covers, it's entirely up to you.

Aside from the Gazette we also have interviews with Sayaconcept, Louie from Rose Noire and Eden from the innovative Lolita brand We're All Mad Here, which is (in)famous for its brilliant Sweet and cute horror inspired prints.

And the fashion doesn't stop there, this month's feature is Kodona fashion because sometimes Boystyle is just simply the way forward.

I hope you all enjoy this new edition of BCM and I wish you all a splendid festive season and a brilliant 2013!

Hilde Heyvaert
Editor in chief

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Kodona feature:
Written by: Hilde Heyvaert, Matthew Sweeck and Clara Lina Wirz

Models: Alexandr C. Gray, Tina Madeliene, Arne Masuy, Amanda Nissen, Matthew Sweeck, Annso Vermeylen

Photography: Hilde Heyvaert, Harry McDougall, Amanda Nissen, Andrea Schlegel, Natalie Witschas

Special thanks to: Kiwamu Kai, Xavier Norindr; Aurélie, David, Trinh and Vanessa of Râmen Events, Semotion, Tom Smith

Forum of the Belgian Cupcakes Lolita fashion group:
<http://belgiancupcakes.proboards.com>

STYLE SPOTLIGHT: Kodona

There is much debate about the origins of Kodona fashion. The most common are that girls wanted their boyfriends to be able to wear a similar style as themselves and thus one day a girl designed the first Kodona outfit. Others think that it was simply started by boys who wanted to join the fashion but didn't want to dress up in the Brolita style nor as an (Elegant Gothic) Aristocrat.

Regardless of its origin, these days **Kodona** is one of the best known, although not the only one, styles for boys in Lolita fashion, it is often referred to as boystyle or ouji and literally translates to "childlike", even though it is by no means childish, and is very similar in appearance to the slightly more mature Prince style. As many Japanese fashion styles, it is not gender bound, and you see girls and boys wear Kodona alike.

The **silhouette** of Kodona is obviously different than that of other Lolita styles. Instead of a skirt one wears knickerboxers (breeches like shorts), bloomer shorts or straight legged classic shorts (think short legged suit trousers), shirts that are either traditional shirts or more Victorian or visual-kei esque in appearance for boys and actual Lolita blouses for girls (if they so choose at least). Most colour schemes are black and white, but tartan prints, colours and sometimes even prints set it apart from other styles such as Dandy and Aristocrat, and can be used in this style.

The currently most popular **footwear** are boots (platform soles optional yet often worn) and rocking horse shoes, but dress shoes, creepers and even mary janes are not unheard of, although the latter are preferred by girls wearing this style.

Accessories consist of ties, bow ties (size to the liking of the person wearing them), jabot, neckties, cravats, scarves tied as bows as far as neckwear is considered.

As far as **socks** are concerned: boot socks, knee high and over the knee socks are the way to go, make sure to match up the length with that of your shorts though. Of course tights can work just as well, and will help you stay warm in colder climes. Socks they may contain a print matching that of the outfit or the coordination's colour scheme.

Waistcoats are also commonly worn garments with this style but are not a necessity. In colder weather cute blazers and even tailcoats are popular to keep warm.

When you choose to wear **make-up**: keep it simple and stick to the basics, some eyeliner and nude make-up are your friend when wearing Kodona. Circle lenses are favourites of many, as is the case with most J-fashion styles these days.

Because this style is so youthful and playful, manga-like **hairdos** are commonplace, although any cute or boyish hairstyle can work with this fashion.

Headwear isn't a must, but if you choose to wear a hat, a trilby, top hat or bowler hat is a very good choice. Or any other headwear specific to the substyle of Lolita you wish to make your Kodona outfit in (e.g. a sailor cap with Sailor Kodona). Girls wearing Kodona may choose a miniature version of the top hat or bowler hat.

Style mixes with other substyles of Lolita such as sailor, (steam)punk or (bitter) sweet are also quite en vogue these days, so if that's your proverbial cup of tea, go for it.

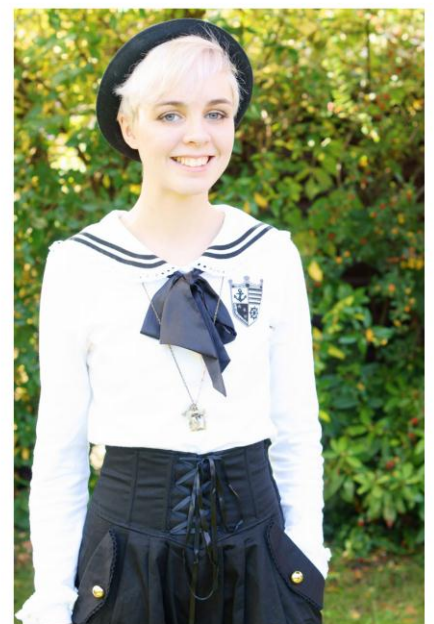
Whilst there are no actual commonly available Kodona brands, *Alice and the Pirates*, *Na + H* and *Atelier Boz* are probably best known for releasing Kodona pieces, but it is definitely worth-while to check out the other Japanese brands, *Bodyline*, indi brands and off brand sites, you never know that you come across that perfect pair of shorts or shirt in the high street. If you can sew yourself, look for historical patterns for breeches, they should be easy enough to adjust to make a pair of suitable trousers.



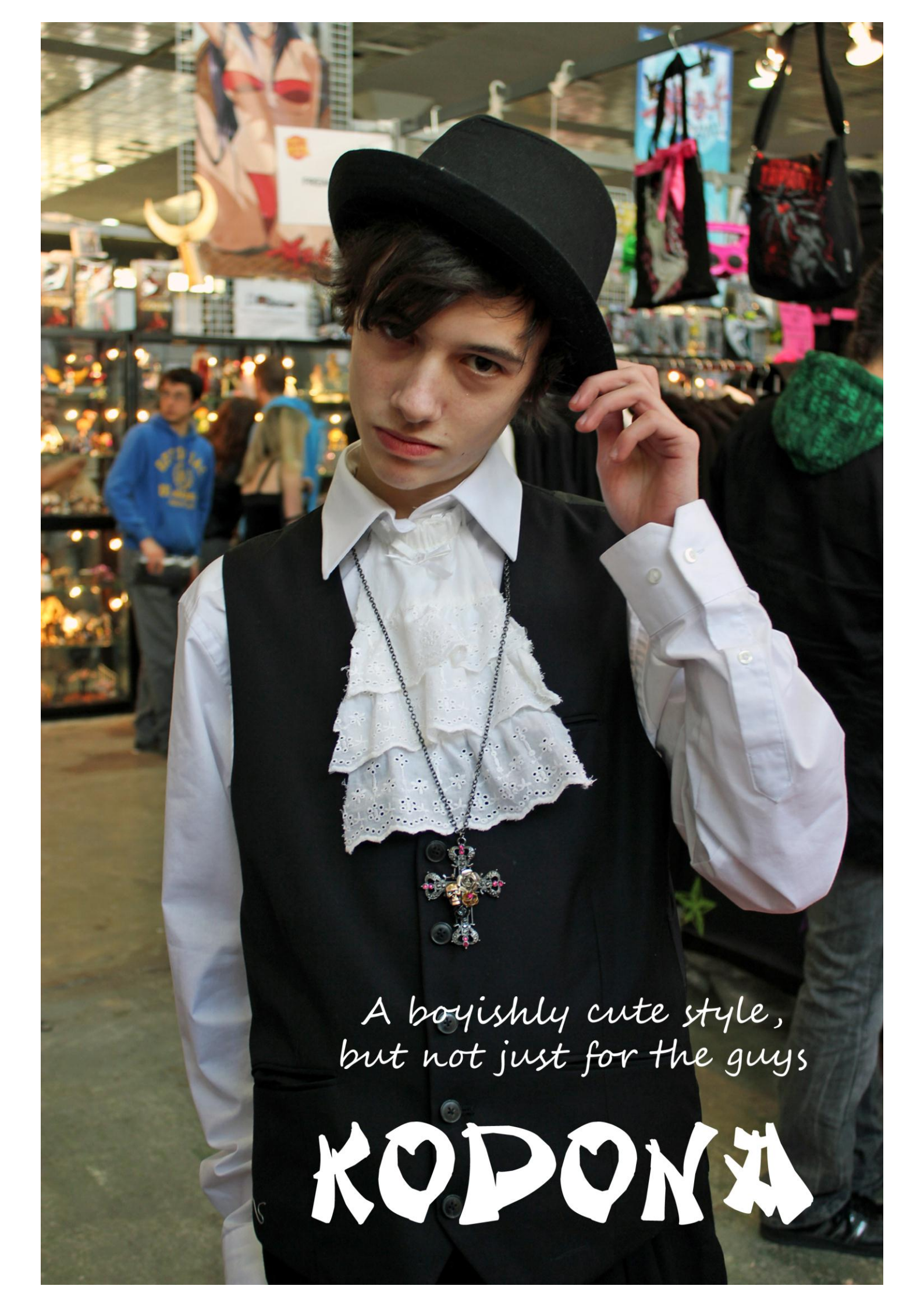
Lolita next to Kodona.



Distinguished Kodona.



Sailor Kodona.

A young man with dark hair is the central figure, wearing a black top hat, a white long-sleeved shirt with a large, ruffled lace collar, and a black vest. He is also wearing a large, ornate cross necklace. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a busy market or fair with various stalls, lights, and other people. A man in a blue hoodie is visible in the background to the left, and a person in a green beanie is to the right. The overall atmosphere is festive and lively.

*A boyishly cute style,
but not just for the guys*

KODONA



Hat, shirt and removable collar, bow tie, vest, pants and belt, design by Alexandr C. Gray. Gloves, Hema. Over the knee socks, Manguun. Shoes, Undercover Shoe. Cameo brooch was gifted. Jewelry and pocket watch, Bijou Brigitte.



Hat, Miho Matsuda. **Blouse**, Bodyline. **Waistcoat**, Marks and Spencer. **Shorts**, Primark. **Socks**, Baby, the Stars Shine Bright. **Shoes**, Schuh.



Forage cap, shirt and sailor suit, designed and made by Alexandr C. Gray. Kneesocks, Manguun. Shoes, Montreal. Butterfly brooch and other jewelry, Bijou Brigitte



Hat, H&M. **Shirt,** Angelic Pretty. **Pullover,** Zara. **Pants,** Bodyline. **Socks,** Sockdreams. **Shoes,** Vagabond.



OCTOBER LOLITA FASHION MEET:

Annual Halloween event

Nieuwenhoven forest, St-Truiden, Belgium

Sunday, October 28 2012

Optional theme: Tim Burton

Happy Halloween...



Event: Japan Expo Belgium
When: November 2 - 4
What: J-culture convention
Where: Tour & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula of choice
Website: www.japan-expo.be

Tome 2 (meaning the second edition) of Japan Expo Belgium, the Belgian chapter of the famous largest J-culture convention held annually near Paris, France was once again a three day extravaganza of all kinds of things Japanese in Tour & Taxis.

Bert and I decided to visit on Friday, which is the not only the first but also the calmest day of the convention. Despite it being on a school holiday, not all college and university students had the day off, and most people were at work, making it a good day to visit because it meant less people and plenty of room to walk around and to browse the shops.

First let me start out by saying that Japan Expo Belgium is indeed a different convention than the other J-culture conventions held in Belgium. It's the last one of the season, and whilst you can find all the typical things such as shops, cosplayers, a cosplay competition and concerts there, the focus lies a lot more on traditional Japanese things as well. Now I can't compare it to the other editions of Japan Expo (Centre, Sud and Paris) as I never attended one of those, but I can compare to *FACTS* and *MiA*, both Belgian conventions which were awesome this year, but have once again been outdone by the bigger and in my opinion better Japan Expo Belgium.

Japan Expo is very well organised and divided into several themed rooms and side rooms of various sizes. The gamers are in one of the large rooms, where they can be as noisy as they like. There were games a plenty, including some truly vintage treasures such as an arcade Pac-Man, which were sure to warm the heart of pretty much any gamer.

A second room was filled with all things traditionally Japanese, focussing very hard on the interaction with guests that were interested in learning something new, such as basic Japanese, a traditional Japanese song or dance, playing games or even *ikebana* (flower arrangement) or have a look at the many little expos such as the bonsai, the Kyôto expo or watch the displays with kimono and samurai armour. There was also the stage with little performances, lectures and artist conferences. Aside from that you had the little shops with typically Japanese things such as all kinds of statues depicting samurai, maneki neko, kokeshi dolls and more. In the side room you had the martial artists displaying their skill. I personally thought it was great to see more than just the traditional martial arts present, which was a nice change from just the traditional karate and aikido showcases. There were also the first restaurants popping up in these areas.

The third room you could find more food, again not all Japanese, and far more shops selling a wide range of things from the usual kawaii to clothing, CDs, fandom items and more. On the side there was the meet and greet area where you could go queue for autographs. I thought that this year the queue was far more organised and the set-up was much better than the previous year. There was also the video stage, where several series and other footage was playing through most of the day.

The fourth and final room had more shops, the cloak room, official festival shop and some more food, with a tuning room with several cars on display on the side and the resting room. It was awesome to see the convention dedicate a significant and actually quiet room just so people could sit for a moment, I would just like to suggest more seating space next year. On Friday it was already hard to find a spot, so I can't even imagine how difficult it must have been on the busier Saturday and Sunday.

Aside from that variation on things on offer they also did their utmost to keep people informed. Pillars with the floor plan as well as the convention program were set up throughout the rooms on key points, and it was pretty easy to find a place where you could get your own foldable map. That all definitely helped getting around in the convention as it was so large.

Foodies could also eat their heart out, provided their wallets could handle it of course. Whilst some things were very reasonably priced, most food was simply overpriced to the point of ridiculous (€ 5 for a hot dog, € 16 for a Japanese omelette, € 5 for a Japanese beer and I could go on). Another thing that was really more expensive than it needed to be was the cloakroom. At € 2 per piece in mid-autumn in bad weather people racked up a considerable bill there with only a couple of pieces to hand over, which is pretty hard on the wallet of everyone on a budget. As for the merchandise, some stalls carried the same things as others, and it was well worth checking the prices on all of them because that could end up saving you a fair amount. The variation was very good, and the prices ranged from reasonable to ridiculous, as is typical to events like these.

Ridiculous prices aside, the staff was generally super friendly and helpful and the crowd was a happy-go-lucky outgoing one that really seemed to take the convention's rules of respect the installations and each other to heart, making Japan Expo a great convention to close this year's Belgian convention season with.



Review by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert. Photography by Hilde Heyvaert.

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN EXPO BELGIUM FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Lolita fashion group shot with Sweet, Classic & Steampunk Lolita and Kodona



Samurai armour



Cosplayer



At one of the many shops



Hasjimemashite by BNK & the Japanese Embassy



Ikebana workshop

Event: Emporium Vernesque
 When: November 10
 What: Steampunk convention
 Where: Willemse
 Arnhem - The Netherlands
 Ticket price: € 6 during presales, € 8,50 at the door
 Info: <http://www.emporiumvernesque.com>

You're probably wondering why there is a review of a steampunk convention in a Japanese culture magazine. Well **first** of all, steampunk is on the rise in Japan, as we all well know by now. **Secondly**, several J-fashion styles are sister styles to steampunk (*kodona*, *classic lolita*, *mori-kei* and *dolly-kei*) or offshoots of the fashion such as steampunk lolita. **Thirdly**: if you find a great con welcoming to members that are into J-fashion and offer them the opportunity to wear it then it's absolutely worth the review. After all, whilst it is a steampunk convention, the organisation made it quite clear that there is no dress code and everyone was equally welcome, whether they wore steampunk or not. And whilst 98% of everyone there did indeed wear steampunk, some opted for another style or regular clothes, which was absolutely fine by everyone present.

The organisation had done a great job offering a wide variety of **workshops, performances** of both bands and tribal dance, and **other things to participate in** such as a group shop taken with an actual antique camera, the steampunk bake-off and many others. Aside from that there were several bars offering a wide variety of decently priced drinks, you could get some food (either from the venue or one of the many places within walking distance in town) and a handful of shops offering their wares to visitors.

The only remark I could possibly make is that the convention venue is rather small. Of course it's logical that for a first time they chose a smaller venue so it's totally understandable. But whilst the Willemse is a lovely little location, it barely held all the visitors vaguely comfortably and space to sit was extremely limited. In November it's also dark early and rather cold, which severely limited the use of the outside space. Should the convention expand in visitor numbers next year, and I'm sure it will, the venue will probably prove to be far too small.

Venue sizing issue aside, the very first edition of this brand new Dutch steampunk convention did not disappoint. It was a small, fun, friendly and well organised affair. It was a great convention and **I absolutely look forward to the next edition of Emporium Vernesque.**

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
 Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.



NOVEMBER LOLITA FASHION MEET

card games and photographs

sunday, November 11 2012
Louvain



Event: HYPER JAPAN - Christmas 2012
When: November 23 - 25
What: The UK's biggest J-culture convention
Where: Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, London, UK
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula of choice
Website: www.hyperjapan.co.uk

As soon as you walk into the cavernous *Earls Court Exhibition Centre*, the smell of Japanese food is already tugging at your stomach, while a truck load of cute is pulling your eyes. *HYPER JAPAN* has only been running for a mere three years, but already it has grown into London's biggest Japanese culture event. And while it only fills a mere third of the giant space at Earls Court, every inch is packed with stands all displaying surprisingly different things. There's everything from sake tasting to designer Japanese socks on show here; it's impossible to decide where to begin.

From the moment doors opened on the first day, the many **food** stands were crowded with curious customers. More than just *sushi*, the alleyway of fragrant food stalls sold delicious *okonomiyaki* (pancakes with vegetables), *takoyaki* (octopus in delicious batter), pumpkin burgers, Japanese curry and rice omelettes. If you're still hungry after all that, bright towers of sweets await; green tea and strawberry kit-kats are just the beginning.

Even the hungriest person cannot fail to be drawn away from the delicious food eventually though, maybe for a bit of **gaming**. New games and consoles, including a huge display by *Nintendo* for their new *Wii U*, are all available for rigorous testing. If you're a fan of digital racing, fighting or problem solving, there's a product for you. For more technology, ITK brought their innovative robots for demonstrations on the main stage.

Other stage guests included sword wielding *KAMUI*, best known for their part as the 'Crazy 88' in the film *Kill Bill*. Just as light footed were the *visual kei* rockers *NINJAMAN JAPAN* whose stage show involved fighting off evil with some impressive acrobatics before grabbing their guitars. When the stage was empty, music videos from super famous band, *The Gazette* played to promote the release of their new album *DIVISION* all over Europe. For something a little more trendy, there was a very pink fashion show with the theme of 'Japanese Cute'.

If you saw anything on the models you liked, there was **plenty of browsing room on the fashion stalls**. Tights from famous stylist *Kyary Pamyu Pamyu*, rainbows of silk kimono or a pop up shop from the most famous rag shop in Harajuku, *ACDC*. Samples of all kinds of products you would never find on the high street here in Europe; starry eyelashes, hair accessories, make up items, every trendy girls dream chance to pick up something new and exclusive.

No matter what it is that you love about Japan, you cannot fail to find something exciting at *HYPER JAPAN*, and if you haven't found anything to love yet, you're sure to find it here. Their Christmas edition this year brought music, fashion, food, films and technology together into one large room. Just one warning, you will want everything.

The next *HYPER JAPAN* event has not yet been announced, but look out for dates on their website: www.hyperjapan.co.uk



Event: Les nouilles ont 5 ans
When: November 24
What: Râmen Event's 5th anniversary celebration
Where: Bar Live 301 - Roubaix - France
Ticket price: € 11
Info: www.ramen-events.com

First of all the team of BCM would like to congratulate Râmen Events on their 5th anniversary. Thank you for putting on all these great tours to allow us to be able to see awesome Japanese artists in Europe (and Belgium!) and epic events such as this one. May you be around for many, MANY more years to come!

Now onto the review:

The above mentioned very awesome Râmen Events, who we all know for bringing great Japanese artists such as *Galaxy 7*, *HITT*, *BLOOD*, ... to name but a few, to Europe so we can enjoy their live performances, is celebrating their 5th anniversary this year, and of course they're doing it not only in style, but with some pretty epic events as well. Three to be exact.

I had the pleasure to be present at the kick-off of their three events anniversary celebration in *Bar Live 301* in *Roubaix* on Saturday, November 24th. And let me tell you, it was well worth traveling to France for!

Not only had they set up a wide selection of events, such as blind testing video games, anime and Japanese music knowledge, a dance competition on which a group could enter making a choreography to *Kyary Pamyu Pamyu's Ponponpon*, a quiz, a photography expo by *Whisper Inside*, calligraphy, karaoke and concerts by *Gori Fater* and *HITT*.

A very busy day indeed, which is why it was very well divided in the day activities starting at 1pm and then the night itself, with concerts and DJ from 9pm onwards.

Bar 301 was packed full of people even early on, who were all very much enjoying the activities and participating in them. It is rare to see an organisation pull off an event on which literally everyone is having a great time either talking with their friends or participating in what's going on but Râmen Events did easily, a testament to how awesome they really are.

Review and photography by Hilde Heyvaert.



LES NOUILLES ON 5 ANS!

The first of three events for Râmen Events' 5th anniversary.

Photos by David Plešzak and Vanessa Aubry (photos HIT)



EVENT REVIEW: Fly Away Fashion tea party - Sparkly Winter Night

Event: Sparkly Winter Night
When: November 25
What: Lolita fashion tea party
Where: Fly Away Fashion, Houten,
The Netherlands
Ticket price: €5 at the door or free if you had
made a purchase in the (web)shop
of € 15 after your reservation and
before the event.
Website: www.flyawayfashion.com

The 25th of November the Lolita brand *Fly Away Fashion* held a **tea party** for their fans in Houten, the Netherlands. Fly Away Fashion is a little indi brand originally run by *Katie* and *Eline*, but since a month Katie runs the brand alone. The brand sells handmade Lolita clothing, wigs, shoes and accessories for very affordable prices. They have a little shop in Houten, near Utrecht.

The **theme** for the tea party was "*Sparkly Winter Night*" and many of the 50 attendees wore something that fitted the theme. Everyone dug out their party dresses and showed up in wonderful coordinates.

Around 13.00 all the Lolitas gathered in the shop and Katie presented the new clothing line of the brand, while we drank a nice cup of tea. The **new line** looked fantastic, the skirts were made of chiffon and the dresses had many nice details. Katie also told about a fashion show the brand is going to have at Tsunacon in February. After her little speech, Katie presented the food and it was glorious. She and her friends made gingerbread men, buttercakes, pie and salads. Everyone was delighted with the food and sat down to enjoy it together with a cup of tea. We also had the time to talk to each other, drool over each other's dresses and just had a good time.

After sitting down for a while, the **outfit contest** began. Katie organized an outfit contest in which you could participate if you would send them a mail in time. I was one of the lucky five girls who were in the outfit contest. Everyone looked beautiful, one girl made snowflakes on her dress herself and another girl made a Christmas dress herself for the occasion. They all looked great, but the public had to vote. Every contestant had to do a little speech and all the speeches were adorable. After the people voted, friends of Katie decided to count the votes.

While the votes were counted, Katie organized a **lottery** where you could win a wig, shoes or some cute accessories. Many people won something which was really nice to see. We also got more tea and some new snacks. After the votes were counted, I turned out to be the winner. It was so unexpected, I couldn't believe it! Everyone got a prize, and I was really happy that I won a skirt from their new line.

After the results from the contest, people had the opportunity to take pictures, talk some more and drink hot chocolate, which everyone definitely enjoyed. We also had to take a group picture, which was quite a hassle with 50 people. Luckily, the picture turned out just fine!

It was really a lovely day and I'm happy Fly Away Fashion will organize another tea party in the summer. It really is a pleasure to attend their tea parties and I can recommend them to anyone!



THE DARK MESSENGER

ZIZ, SPECIES & LLOY LIVE À BRUXELLES

The second night of Râmen Events' 5 anniversary celebrations
Saturday, December 1
LR6 - Brussels - Belgium

Photos by David Pleszak



**RÂMEN EVENTS 5TH ANNIV', 3ÈME NUIT!
HITT, ZIZ, SPECIES & LLOY À PARIS**

Sunday, December 2
Dame de Canton - Paris - France

Photos by David Plezak & Vanessa Aubry (photo HITT)





Dear politicians
of Brussels,
can we get
the REAL
tree back
next year
please?



DECEMBER LOLITA FASHION MEET

4th anniversary of the
Belgian Cupcakes
Lolita fashion community
+ Brussels Christmas
market visit.
It's tradition!

Sunday, December 2nd 2012



Event: Archeon Midwinter Fair
When: December 8 & 9
What: Fantasy Fair
Where: Archeon
 Alphen aan den Rijn
 The Netherlands
Ticket price: free for under 5 year olds
 € 10,50 for 5 to 10 year olds
 € 10,95 for an adult ticket.
Website: www.archeon.nl



The annual **Midwinter Fair** at the archaeological and historical museum compound of *Archeon* is probably traditionally the last event of the year. Partially indoors and outdoors this fair exhibits the best of history, music, fantasy and various subcultures and fandoms. And despite the horribly cold and bad weather of this edition, the turn-out of visitors seemed to be really quite large (at least on the Sunday when I was there).

Frankly to be honest the weather was the only real downside to this edition of Midwinter Fair for me personally, which shows that the organisation did a smashing job as the only thing that I didn't like is something beyond their control. They did prepare for this sort of thing quite well by setting up special large tents that were heated and which housed the shops, some stages and areas for food and drink. In the many of the historical buildings they either housed shops, storytellers, concerts, areas to eat and drink or just relax and sit for a little. This isn't only **making excellent room of available space** and providing shelter at the same time, it also considerably adds to the atmosphere as you can go and discover something new nearly everywhere. Even on the roads you could be passed by a wandering troupe of geisha and samurai, monks and a cheerful tambourine player accompanying them, orcs riding their motorcycles (I'm not sure they were supposed to be a Warhammer 40K Space Ork Warbiker mob but they reminded me of them and they were cool regardless) and even a small car version of the *Nautilus* submarine from *Jules Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.



Some **groups**, such as *The Steampunk Objective*, did brave the elements and had set up camp outside. I salute them for their bravery, despite of the cold and episodes of rain they still stuck their spot, happy to talk to anyone, pose for photos and explain about their awesome subculture. So an extra kudos to them!

The Objective were not the only ones going out in the winter temperatures: many groups of musicians, costumed artists and visitors alike were happy to mingle, pose with and entertain every single rainless moment of the day. This made that despite the weather being mank, the fair didn't seem to suffer an ounce. People were still happily wandering and having a good time and even the local playground was filled to pretty much the brim with younger visitors having a great time.



I also really liked how the **stores** sold wares ranging from children's stuff, LARP weapons and supplies to clothing, accessories, books and esoteric bits and bobs and even home décor. I've been to several fairs and conventions this year and whilst there were of course shops I had seen at various other events, it was nice to see several I hadn't seen anywhere else, which was cool.

Most **dining** stalls sold the same kind of food, but after some looking around you could find some different things to eat at mostly reasonable prices, so that was alright.



It was a successful event I'd say, and I really do hope that their next one, *Midsummer Fair*, will be just as well done as this 10th edition of Midwinter Fair!"

AGNES VAN DE GENACHTE IS A STUDENT AT THE KUL (CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN) IN BELGIUM AND IS CURRENTLY LIVING AND STUDYING IN JAPAN AS PART OF A PRESTIGIOUS ONE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP. FOR BCM SHE WRITES A COLUMN ABOUT HER LIVE AND ADVENTURES IN NIIGATA WHENEVER SHE CAN SPARE THE TIME.

I'm currently living and studying in Niigata, Japan, for a year and would like to share some of my experiences here. For this piece, I would like to tell a little bit about the university. Note that this is only for Niigata university and this may not be representative for other universities in Japan.

Where in Belgium the university is scattered around the whole city, divided into small faculties, *Niigata University* consist of one big campus a little bit outside the city, where every faculty has its own building on the same campus grounds. Since I'm an exchange student, I'm not part of a faculty, but of the *International Affairs Division*, located in the *Advanced Education and Research Building*. The general atmosphere here is quite relaxed and open. Every class group has its own classroom, which generally creates a very pleasant environment; it's a lot nicer to have all you classes in the same room, instead of having to go to a different room for every class.

The classroom itself is quite small (we're a class of twenty and we barely fit comfortably), with a blackboard, beamer, and a very nice air-conditioning that can be used as a heater during winter. Both the chairs and desks (everyone has his own desk) have wheels, which makes it easier to change formations during class (which is often done) and when there is a desk missing, you just roll one over from a different classroom. During lunch time it's even allowed to eat your lunch in the classroom, so you can form a circle with the tables and enjoy your lunch with your friends.

Every class lasts one hour and thirty minutes and there is always a fifteen minute break in between, which is something that would be very welcome in Belgium too, since having class for two hours and then immediately after that a different class is quite exhausting.

The general atmosphere during class is also very pleasant. During class in Louvain, I always felt stressed and pressured to perform. Of course, I'm also expected to do my best here, but the pressure isn't there, which makes going to class a lot more fun. The same goes for the talking in Japanese; it comes a lot more natural and without the stress of making mistakes here, where in Louvain I was too terrified to make a mistake and would sometimes only speak when I was asked to.

Last but not least is attendance, which is completely different from Belgian universities, where they generally don't care much whether you show up or not. Here the teacher actually writes down every time who came to class and who didn't, because your final grade undergoes a lot of influence based on your attendance. Like one of my teachers said today "it doesn't matter if your grades are good, the total result will be bad if you're absent too often". You can be absent two times without problems, but from the third time and especially from the fourth time, it's going to have a negative influence on your total at the end of the term. Unless you can provide a note from the doctor (we're students, we'll only go to a doctor if we're almost dying). Same goes with coming to late; being late doesn't matter if you're there within the first thirty minutes. You can be later than thirty minutes twice and after that every two times you're late will count as one absence. And they're really strict about it, so even though you get a lot of chances, once you're out of those it's over with the fun and you will see the result of it in your final grade. But this also has a positive effect. If your test results aren't always that good, you can make your final result better by attending every class.

The Japanese system is quite different from the Belgian one and I have to say that I personally like this one better. Or at least for as long as I'm not getting seriously sick and can't go to class for a few days. But we'll cross that bridge when we get there.



J-MUSIC CORNER

Japanese music reviews and interviews.

Reviews by Hilde Heyvaert, Bert Van den Wyngaert & Marjan Van Esbroeck.



ACE
"ELEMENTA ALCHEMICA"
 Single
 Release Date: 21.11.2012

This new four song single from ACE (also known as A) is more of the band as we've come to know them: melodious and symphonic J-rock with beautiful violin arrangements that often flow along with the vocals and are always a fine addition, never just background filler. All of this topped with strong, often rapid guitar riffs that can easily compete with those of the classic songs and some ethnic elements to finish it all off, creating that typical and original ACE sound. ACE isn't reinventing themselves with this work, rather they build on their own beaten path, but they do it well and I'm sure that this single will please most of the band's fans and those of the symphonic rock genre alike.

CONCERT REVIEW

Acid Mothers Temple live
November 8 2012
Kavka – Antwerp - Belgium

AMT is basically your good ol' Drum & Bass, but louder. Much, much louder. And if possible, crazier, too. These guys are well into their 50s and 60s but don't let that fool you, they rock the skin off of modern-day rock stars! Although the stage was small, all five of them fit comfortably, as they don't move around much during their performance. It's not about them, it's about the music. There's no "show", no crazy dance moves, no "oi! oi! oi!" that bands often make you do.. nothing of the sort. Just them, their music, and your imagination. This is how I imagine a metal-head unicorn would sound like. ..though perhaps they didn't have to be quite so loud, the feeling and message would have come across even on a lower volume. These guys were pretty much what I expected them to be from hearing demos. Although, granted, the bassist suddenly pulling out a soprano flute was an element of surprise.



HITT
"LOVE X HATE"
 Album
 Release date: 10.11.2012

HITT returns to the European audience with a new 10 track CD in *LOVE X HATE*, releasing new J-rock tunes that will no doubt keep his fans happy for ages. Or at least to his next release. What stands out the most on this album is HITT's voice. The electronics on this CD often remind of video games (especially on the opening track *HEY! HATE!*) and the instruments, especially the guitar, mix and match perfectly with vocals and the electro elements, as well as the other instruments on *LOVE X HATE*. As far as J-rock albums go, this one is a pretty accomplished one and I'm sure that fans of this particular style of Japanese music and HITT alike will know how to appreciate this to the fullest.



J
"15th ANNIVERSARY DVD
& Blu-ray -Complete clips-"
 DVD
 Release date: 28.11.2012

This new DVD/Blu-ray compilation isn't just a collection of J's music videos but also contains some of his recent live tracks from his 15 years as a successful solo artist such as there are *Storm Rider* and *Baby Baby*, both from his last tour & CD release *On Fire*. This makes *15th ANNIVERSARY DVD & Blu-ray -Complete clips-* more than just a bunch of footage most fans already own anyway in one form or another, it makes it a very worthwhile thing to add to your collection if you're fan of J. It's also a good opportunity for newer fans of the man to get their hands on clips that were originally included in older, now out of print, releases and get acquainted with some of his older works, that are let's be honest, rather different style and genre wise than his last album.



Kiyoharu
"UNDER THE SUN"
 Album
 Release Date: 7.11.2012

Kiyoharu returns after two recent singles with a 12 song album with mostly new material. It has a different version of his hit collaboration with *INORAN The Sun* but everything else, as far as I'm aware, is new. I have said it before though in a review of his single following up *The Sun* and I will repeat myself: without INORAN Kiyoharu's music doesn't cut it. I'm sure his many fans will enjoy his album but to me personally it sounds a bit standard, unoriginal and just like all his other work. If I am to pick and choose from the immense J-rock pool out there, there's stronger and better artists than Kiyoharu around, who do reinvent themselves rather than repeating the same thing over and over.



LUNA SEA
"The End of the Dream /Rouge"
 Single
 Release date: 12.12.2012

LUNA SEA is properly back and how. With their double A side single featuring two brand new tracks, some of the first since their reunion back in 2010, *The End of the Dream* and *Rouge*. Both are songs reminiscent of *LUNA SEA*'s glory days of old, that same strong vibe and song writing, the typical band sound we come to know of him and yet you can definitely hear that they've progressed as musicians both individually and as a band, making the only regret about *The End of the Dream/Rouge* that it is only just two songs and not a full album, for which we sadly have to wait an undisclosed time longer. Fans will rejoice at the return of one of Japan's signature J-rock bands, and for those that aren't fans, profit of the occasion to check them out if you're into Japanese rock music, chances are great that you will be more than a little pleasantly surprised!



Morning Musume
"13 Colorful Character"
 Album – European version
 Release Date: 30.10.2012

Thanks to *Bishi-Bishi* we can now easily enjoy the music of reknown J-pop group *Morning Musume* with the special release of their latest album *13 Colorful Character*. And enjoyable it is indeed! The 12 song album is a very well varied collection of all manner of style J-pop songs, ranging from more ballad and traditional songs to upbeat modern songs riddled with elec-

tronics so thoroughly that they would fit right into popular clubs. They take the different voices of the singers into account perfectly so everyone is filling in the right part of the song, making for a very well working total in the arrangements and combo with instruments or electronics. When listening to the album it's easy to understand just why *Morning Musume* is such as popular and successful band and I'm sure J-pop fans everywhere will really enjoy this. Even if you just like the genre and aren't really familiar with the band I would really recommend this one. I also find that this is one of the albums within the J-pop genre that can be easiest enjoyed if you're generally into other genres as it is so well varied and accessible.



"Penicillin
20th Anniversary Fan Selection
Best DRAGON HEARTS"
 Best of album
 Release Date: 4.11.2012

Penicillin is celebrating their 20th anniversary and releases two different albums, this one is the one with songs selected by their fanbase. And for the fans this is surely a must have, with special edition of some of the songs and a DVD with all kinds of features and live tracks, provided you buy the special limited edition of course, the normal version is without DVD. Personally I think that it's great that the band has allowed fans to participate in their anniversary this way, and it'll be a nice thing to add to a collection.



Penicillin
"20th Anniversary Member
Selection Best PHOENIX STAR"
 Best of album
 Release date: 5.12.2012

A mere month after their fan selected best off Penicillin is back with another best of release, *PHOENIX STAR*, this time with a selection of the band's personal favourites, containing yet again a mix of original and re-mastered tracks. What I like is that they chose different songs for *PHOENIX STAR* than the ones featured on *DRAGON HEARTS* which makes sure that fans aren't double buying. This one also comes in a normal CD release and a version with once again, just like is the case with *DRAGON HEARTS*, special DVD features, but again different ones than the ones for the fans selection release.



Rose Noire
"Neo Renaissance
-2nd Movement-"
EP
Release Date: 12.12.2012



Story Seller
"XX"
Album
Release Date: 27.12.2012

The sequel EP to *Neo Renaissance -1st Movement-*, which was released on July 25 of this year, is in a radically different style. Where *-1st Movement-* was a feast of, often *Rococo* inspired, classical style music, the second part is reminiscent of dark club music and Gothic tea parties. I do really enjoy *Louie's* voice on here as it's very suited to the lower key he sings in on this EP. As always the violin play of both siblings is fantastic and the classical elements combined with contemporary electronic sounds make for a nice mix. I'm quite curious to see where they'll lead this in the future, as it's more upbeat than what we're used of this duo and the CD often sounds like they're still experimenting with this particular musical path, which does cause some wonder about what they'll do next. In any case this is a very versatile work with some brilliant moments on it and I look forward to see what Jill and Louie will surprise their fans in days to come.

Occasionally we at BCM come across a band or artist who isn't Japanese but deserves a spot in our review section nonetheless because they are simply THAT awesome. Today we would like to introduce you to Korean all-girl punk band *Story Seller*, who's debut album *XX* is soon available in Europe thanks to *Bishi-Bishi*. Without the shadow of a doubt, *Story Seller*, despite of their mostly Korean lyrics, can easily measure themselves to legendary all girl bands such as *The Runaways* and *L7* and reknown Japanese punk-rock band *Trill-Dan*. Their 10 song release is a fine mix of hard hitting punk songs, softer rock songs, almost avant-garde genre mixes and a proper ballad. The vocals of singer *Binna* are simply amazing and perfect for every style the band chooses to tackle and fits the arrangements and the accompaniment of other instruments perfectly. Not only are the rest incredibly skilled at their chosen instrument, they play together so incredibly well, like a fantastically well-oiled punk-rock machine almost, a kind of harmony you seldom find with bands on their first record these days. I am very much looking forward to future releases of this epic group, because I truly believe that they'll only get even better still.



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COMING SOON !



Misaruka

Epilogue-Merrow-

～この想いと共に私は空気になって～

■ライブ会場&通信販売限定シングル

[Epilogue-Merrow-] 2012年10月24日発売

アンデルセンの不朽の名作「人魚姫」をフューチャーしたコンセプト「-Merrow-」シリーズ完結編！
録り下ろしの新曲2曲によるライブ会場と通信販売限定シングル！

SWMR-4 / 1,260円(税込) / 完全限定300枚 / 収録曲: 01. -Ariel- 02. For you-

■[Epilogue-Merrow-] 発売記念ツアー

2012年11月27日 池袋CYBER (The blink of a nebula Vol.8)

11月10日 池袋CYBER (Rose Noire レコ発初主催イベント) 11月17日 池袋CYBER (The blink of a nebula Vol.7)

11月19日 浦和NARCISS (ワンコインイベント) 12月7日 池袋CYBER (Calmando Qual主催イベント)

12月12日 池袋CYBER (Dark Ambition Exposed Vol.1) 12月19日 池袋CYBER (innocent wonderland. vol.1)

■着うた&着ムービー配信!

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■レーベルオムニバスにミサルカ「-Baiser-」参加決定!

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<http://karatetsu.jp/pc/artist/58676.html>

Costume: Love Cats, Accessories: Supporter System, Photo by Akio Yokoyama, Hair & Make: Tritz for Tritz

<http://misaruka.jp>



CONCERT REVIEWS: Japanese music at Japan Expo Belgium

Reviews by Marjan Van Esbroeck.

Photography by Crossfaith (Crossfaith), David Pleszak (Galaxy 7) and Marjan Van Esbroeck (You Kikkawa and 1000say)

CROSSFAITH

Crossfaith is known for being rough, tough and most importantly, loud. I'd heard from fans that their on-stage loudness exceeds that of their CD, and all I can say is: myth confirmed. These guys rock themselves out completely, dragging each and every crowd member along with them. Even the photographers had problems holding their head still enough to capture the band. Although, truth be told, the lighting was pretty bad for photos. I didn't get a single shot that I could consider useable. That said, the overall experience was in no way marred by this little inconvenience. It's just that there are very few photos of Crossfaith's performance. Which is a pity, because it certainly was a gig to remember.



GALAXY 7

First of all, the sound was much better than at FACTS two weeks earlier, and a lot more people showed up to see them. Both men appreciated this visibly, going all-out on their instruments and interacting with the crowd. Daisuke even managed a few wild dance moves, more for himself than the crowd supposedly, but they cheered it on nonetheless. The setlist was more or less the same as at FACTS, though a few songs were switched this time around. The general atmosphere was cozy and had a certain familiarity to it, making *this* the concert I will remember, not the one at FACTS.

(For a review of the Galaxy 7 concert at FACTS, and an interview with them, check BCM # 9).



YOU KIKKAWA

Although alone, this cheerful Japanese singer had no problem getting and keeping the crowd's attention throughout her show. Her general image is rather "kawaii", and her broad grin never left her face, making her a pleasure to look at. Her songs are always more or less upbeat, even the more sad songs, and I do not regret seeing her twice! She has a very strong presence, without being overwhelming. Perhaps it also has to do with her being very young, after all, she's only just turned 20.. Her sweetness doesn't stop when the show does, though, I randomly ran into her after the show and she flashed everyone a lovely smile as she passed.



1000SAY

At first glance, you'd think *David Bowie* had lent his wardrobe to these guys. For me personally, that's a plus. Especially keyboard player *Michelle* made me hear Bowie's "*Space Oddity*" in the back of my head, watching him set up his gear before the show. The music itself had absolutely nothing to do with Bowie, though. It was as spacey as Michelle's outfit, certainly, but it's a lot harder. The line-up is kind of unique too: a male keyboard player, a male guitarist, a female bassist and a female drummer. But believe you me, these four know how to rock, work a crowd, work a stage and work their music.



Sayaconcept

Japan Expo Belgium - Brussels - Belgium

Friday, November 2 2012

With its blend of modern day electronics and traditional Japanese music from Okinawa, Sayaconcept offered at the very least an intriguing option to see live at Japan Expo Belgium on their opening day.

And it has to be said that the trio did not disappoint in regaling the, pretty much full, main stage hall with their particular blend of *Modern Traditional*.

The combination of contemporary electro mostly taken care of by *Daii* and the beautiful yet haunting voice of singer *Mina* were sure to compel and the addition of traditional instruments such as the taiko drum and sanshin (a traditional snake-skin covered three string instrument) and even the violin finish their music perfectly, making for a truly grand mix of all the best of East meets West and Japanese tradition with Western modernity.

I loved how they filled their set list with a specific combination of songs, more traditional and more modern, but always a combination of both and leading the audience through a veritable landscape of emotions and sounds through their music. Going from haunting and soul touching to melancholia and hopeful, the wide range of feelings that the band can portray so skilfully is truly artful and amazing.

Review and photography by Hilde Heyvaert



CONCERT REVIEW

An Cafe

Melkweg - Amsterdam - The Netherlands

Friday, November 9 2012

On Friday November 9th An Cafe performed at the *Melkweg* hall in Amsterdam. There was a little confusion as to whether or not photos were allowed, but turns out they were. I didn't have my good camera with me, but my mobile phone camera took decent photos (considering it's a mobile phone).

What stood out first of all is how small and cozy the *Melkweg* is, perfect for concerts like this. I was told it wasn't even sold out, so that meant there would be a lot of breathing space. Boy, was I wrong. The band almost literally pulled the entire crowd to the stage with their energy.

They got the crowd's full devotion from the first note until the last, whether it was hard rock loud noise, rapping or a very touching song, these five know how to convey their thoughts in music.

The members even learned how to pronounce a few Dutch phrases by heart to read from little memo papers on stage, which got reactions varying from "awww!!!" to laughter because it was sweet and hilarious at the same time.

It was brilliant to see them enjoy their own performance as much as they did, things like that show why the band decided to continue playing after their hiatus. Their joy is not only contagious, it also lingers for days after the concert!

I had never seen them live before, but will certainly be there when they come back as promised by vocalist *Miku*.

Review and photography by Marjan Van Esbroeck.



Popular Visual-kei band *the Gazette* is not only celebrating their 10th anniversary this year but has also released their critically acclaimed album *DIVISION*. With the new album released in Europe via *JPU Records* we were lucky enough to be able to ask singer *RUKI* some questions over email.

By way of introduction, can you say something positive about each of your fellow band members?

I don't know what roles other members have, but every one of them is one-of-a-kind.

You've released your new album *DIVISION* here in Europe on *JPU Records*, what are your hopes for the album and what do you want the European fans to know about it?

I'd rather want to hear honest and realistic impressions from overseas than telling about mine.

What's your personal favourite song on the album?

I like all of them, but especially *DRIPPING INSANITY*.

Will there be a European tour to follow the European release?

I would love to.

Congratulations on your 10 year anniversary, what is your personal best memory from all these years of *the Gazette*?

Our first show. I want to experience that sensation of tension once again.

What would you say is the band's greatest achievement so far and what goal do you still most aspire towards?

When we complete a tour. When we come to the final show and realize that we have worked up to something in shape, I feel the sensation close to accomplishment.

What job would you be doing now if you weren't a musician?

I can't imagine, but at least I know I must have been a lousy person *laughs*!

Being Belgian we're of course curious about this: what's the first thing you think about when you think about Belgium?

I have the image that it's famous for waffles.

Could you pass on a message for your Belgian fans?

We see many people coming from Europe to Japan to see us. So we feel that now it's our turn to visit you. Keep your fingers crossed. Thank you always for your support and messages!

Official site: www.pscompany.co.jp/gazette

The Gazette on JPU Records: jpurecords.com

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photo provided by JPU Records.
Special thanks to RUKI and Tom Smith.





EARLY IN NOVEMBER, SAYACONCEPT DELIGHTED BELGIAN AUDIENCES AT JAPAN EXPO BELGIUM WITH THEIR BEAUTIFUL MIX OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE MUSIC AND CONTEMPORARY ELECTRONICS. WE SPOKE TO MINA AND DAII TO FIND OUT A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THIS UNIQUE AND INTRIGUING BAND.

These days it's often hard to have your own voice as an artist. However, your work has a great balance of unique style and technical skill. Can you touch on your tools and process for your work, and how you find that balance?

We try to create a particular musical universe by mixing organic sounds of acoustic music, which is harder and colder, with electronics. We're both classically trained in violin and piano which permits us to maintain a certain instrumental technique and a style of interpretation. But improvisation is also part of our music on stage and we try to bring a fresh touch and spontaneity to our performances.

What inspired you to start Sayaconcept and specifically mix traditional Japanese music with electronics in the way you do?

Mina: I discovered traditional music in Okinawa during the years I lived there. I was immediately fascinated by that music of which the artistic and social identity is very strong. When I returned to Europe I contacted *Daii*, who is an electronic music artist and who I already knew and we started mixing these two musical universes to create something more modern and universal. And so *Sayaconcept* was born.

Are the traditional Japanese songs you incorporate into your music something you grew up with? Or did you look into them when you started the band?

Mina: I grew up with Japanese music but I didn't know the traditional songs of Okinawa before I went there in 2004. At first I simply wanted to learn to play the *sanshiin* because I love the sound a lot. But all the local musicians told me that the *sanshin* was just there to accompany the singing so I had no other choice then to start singing *smiles*. Those traditional songs really inspired the creation of *Sayaconcept*.

Mina, what would you recommend to people wanting to learn how to play the *sanshin* on how to get started themselves?

Mina: I already played the violin and that aided me when I first started learning to play the *sanshin*. But most of my friends who learned to play the *sanshin* in Okinawa weren't musicians already and some of them have become excellent *sanshin* players! The *sanshin* is a pretty accessible instrument but it's also very playful and sociable at the same time as it's a kind of music shared with people. I think that those wanting to learn how to play it should be unafraid to start. It suffices to have the will and desire to start learning it and the rest will follow suit.

What are your strongest beliefs when it comes to creating music?

In Europe most people immediately think of J-pop when they think about Japanese music. We want to show another facet of Japanese music and show that this music can be different and creative.

Which song did you enjoy performing the most this European tour and why?

"*Kodama*" because it represents the message we want to convey through our music well. It's to say: we want to confront the beauty of nature to the modern world in an epic and dramatic way like in the movies by Hayao Miyazaki.

How would you compare the Belgian audience to the Japanese?

We are a little under the impression that the Belgian audience had a kind of curiosity when it comes to our music because it's a type of music they've never heard before. The Japanese audience was more expressive during the concerts because people there were more touched by the texts and traditional sounds.

What did you like most about your stay in Belgium?

Jests driving on the Belgian roads. No in all seriousness, the very warm welcome.

What are your plans for the band in 2013?

Releasing the album and doing a promo tour.

Do you have a message for your fans?

Follow us on our Facebook page because we wish to share our unique world with our fans via the news on our page!

Official site: <http://sayaconcept.senseistudio.com/>

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/sayaconceptofficial>

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Sayaconcept.
Special thanks to Mina, Daii and Xavier Norindr.





ON DECEMBER 12TH,
ROSE NOIRE
HAVE RELEASED THEIR
SECOND AND FINAL
INSTALMENT IN THEIR
TWO PART EP SERIES
“**NEO RENAISSANCE**”.
RADICALLY DIFFERING FROM
PART 1, WE SPOKE TO SINGER
AND VIOLINIST **LOUIE**
TO FIND OUT A LITTLE MORE
NOT ONLY ABOUT
THEIR LATEST RELEASE
BUT ALSO ABOUT THEIR
PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

You're releasing the sequel to your last EP this December, why did you choose to release it in several mini albums rather than in one full album? And how will Neo-Renaissance part 2 differ from part 1?

We wanted to mark the character of each disk clearly. What I mean is: *Neo Renaissance -1st movement-* is the bright and cheerful side and *-2nd movement-* is the dark side of that character. If we released it whole in just one album, both would have separated within that album. Therefore we made it as 2 disks, one the sequel to the other.

Will you continue to build on the style you set in the first part or will it be different?

-2nd movement- is surely similar as far as the composition of the songs goes, yet it is really different because the second EP is filled with dark songs only. To put it more professionally: *-2nd movement-*'s songs are composed in *minor key*.

What do you want fans to absolutely know about it?

Nothing special! Feel the atmosphere of songs!

Are there going to be more parts to Neo-Renaissance in the future?

No, next is a brand new style I think!

Neo-Renaissance part 1 had a significant amount of Rococo elements to the sound, will you continue using historical musical influences on the other Neo-Renaissance album?

For us the classical sound is like a backbone. So to express the sense of ourselves through a sound like that is a key element of Rose Noire's sound!

Is there another historical (musical) style you would still like to incorporate in Rose Noire's sound?

Basically we use a European classical sound in it, so at least now I don't have any idea for using another one!

You are often seen with your skull, Sebastian, how did he become part of Rose Noire?

Sebastian is a founder of Rose Noire. He has a story and it is sung in the song "*Bones*". (Editor: which is on *Neo Renaissance -2nd Movement-*.)

How did you come up with the name Sebastian for your skull?

We didn't come up with it, nor could we imagine it. We really couldn't as his original name is Sebastian.

You were recently part of Steam Garden, and you often perform at the same events as Strange Artifact, is Steampunk something you would like to explore more?

Steampunk is little bit difficult for us because we don't understand correctly what steampunk is. But my friend Luke from *Chaos Royale*, who is the organizer of *Steam Garden*, advised me to put the essence of Victorian Steampunk into Rose Noire. This idea sounds good!

When we interviewed you last you mentioned you'd like to come to Europe next but that there were no plans yet? Do you think there is more chance of you being able to tour here after the release of the next EP?

Not yet. However there is more chance I think.

If you could come to Europe, which places would you absolutely want to visit?

We've been to France and Italy before to study and play the violin, so we want to go back to the places we have been like the *Place d'Opera*. And of course we want to visit places we've never been.

What plans do you have for Rose Noire in 2013?

Actually we are planning a new style now. I'm sorry I cannot talk about the details but I believe you'll like the new one *smiles*.

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Akio Yokoyama.
Special thanks to Louie and Kiwamu Kai.





**CUPCAKE
FOCUS:**
Matthew

Boystyle, Miss Alice, art

matthew

Doing an article and feature about kodona and not including a focus on Matthew is simply not done, so for this edition BCM is turning the spotlight on the designer of upcoming brand Miss Alice.

You predominantly wear Kodona, are there any other J-fashion styles you could see yourself wear?

Dolly-kei and mori-kei, there is something about those styles that speaks and appeals to me.

What attracts you so much about Japanese fashion?

The freedom and spontaneity of the fashion. I love how it doesn't really have all these rules, just wear what you like.

You're working on your own Lolita label: Miss Alice. Could you tell us a little more about it?

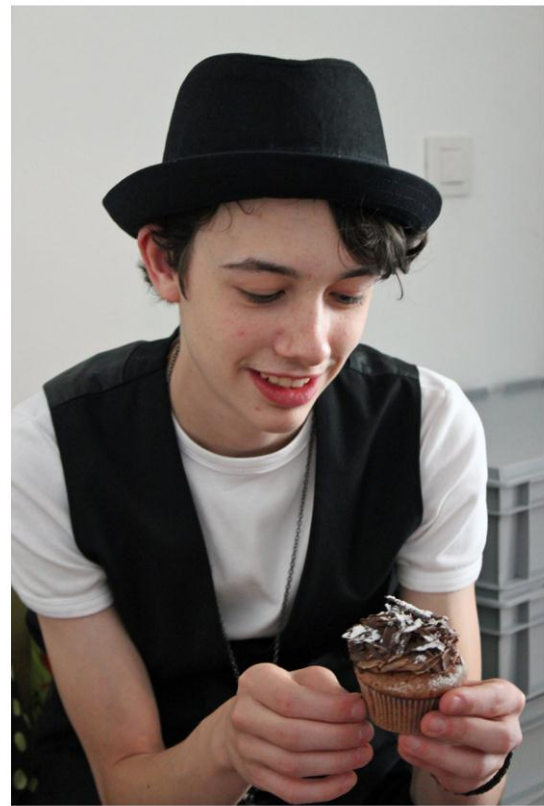
Miss Alice is a brand that is design for everybody: it's custom sized and everything is washable, even the prints. I want that everybody who wants to wear Lolita can wear pieces from Miss Alice: something for every style and every size. And it gives people the opportunity to wear it daily.

Which styles will you design and when can we expect your first collection?

Every print is gothic or classic, but I design for every style: sweet, gothic, boy style,... Even styles like steampunk and guro. And normally coming August 2013 there will be a tea party to release the brand.

You're an art student, in how far is your art influenced by Japanese culture?

Too much sometimes, mostly the things I draw are retro fashion illustrations with a Japanese twist.



You're also known to be a big music lover, which are your top 5 favourite artists?

1. Versailles
2. Miyako Hasegawa
3. Olivia
4. Future World Music
5. Perfume

But, my personal top 5 changes every month so don't pin me on it.

Name your most and least favourite thing about Lolita Fashion.

Most favourite: the community.

Least favourite: the elitist behaviour from some brands.

in a nutshell

Name: Matthew Sweeck

Forum nick: lostfantasie

Age: 17

Styles: oujisama, kodona

Favourite brands: Infanta, Alice and the Pirates, ichigo15

Wearing Lolita fashion since: 2009



LOLITA EXTRAORDINAIRE: We're All Mad Here

BONES, ZOMBIE, ZOMBIE PONIES, TWISTED TEA PARTIES, POISONED SKULL CHERRIES...

NOTHING IS TOO WACKY AND DELIGHTFULLY WEIRD FOR AUSTRALIAN INDI BRAND **WE'RE ALL MAD HERE**, WHO SET THEMSELVES CLEARLY APART FROM OTHER SWEET LOLITA BRANDS WITH THEIR PERFECT MIX OF SWEET AND CREEPY CUTE. WE SPOKE TO EDEN, THE BRAND'S DESIGNER TO LEARN A LITTLE MORE ABOUT WAMH.

How did you first come into contact with Lolita fashion and what inspired you to start wearing it yourself and ultimately develop your own label?

I first came across Lolita fashion when I held a stall selling jewellery with my friend *Tahlia* at our local convention *AVcon*. We met so many amazing people, including *Kelly* from *Vitae Clothing*, who had a table right next to us. She pretty much sold out of her beautiful creations on the first day! It was a few years ago now, but I still remember thinking of how gorgeous all the Lolitas looked. Both *Tahlia* and I were so taken with it, but we were a bit too scared to try it for a while in case we wore something wrong! I dabbled a tiny bit in not-very-Lolita-y things like a pink and black stripy corset and skirt from *Lip Service*, just because I wanted to wear something pretty and punky. The light bulb moment came when I saw a post on facebook: *Ergi* were running a Lolita design competition, and I thought "actually, I could do that!" It turned out to be a Lolita design/drawing competition only, but that didn't matter because the idea had been planted. I created my first design, refined it and got it printed and wore it to *AVcon* that year *smiles*.

Do you uniquely wear Lolita yourself when it comes to Japanese fashion? Or do you also wear other styles?

I'm actually a casual/part-time Lolita wearer. I'll wear my designs for meets when I have the time to go to them and conventions and sometimes casually when I feel like getting a bit more dressed up, but I usually wear jeans and skull or cat shirts.

How long have you been running WAMH so far?

It feels like a while now, but the label is not even a year old! All the designs were actually created in 2011, but the first print *Sugary Bones* wasn't released until May this year. I've been doing it part-time since then and full time for the last couple of months, supported by a small business program I went through.

What is your ultimate dream for the label that you hope to accomplish?

Laughs this may be super practical, but I'd love to get the turnaround times and costs down! A less practical dream would be to have enough money to send promo girls to Japan to strut around in WAMH dresses and skirts until they get snapped by *KERA* magazine. But that one is definitely just a dream!

Could you describe the first Lolita garment you've ever created?

The *Skullette* skirt I wore to *AVcon*! I just did a fully elasticated waistband and attached some skull lace I found on *etsy* to it. I was so stoked to find skull lace! It was white, and when *Kelly* saw it she casually told me that I could have dyed it pink or black to match the skirt and I was like: "Oh. Dammit!"

Are there any other J-fashion styles you would like to incorporate in the label some day?

Fairy Kei and/or *Mori Girl*. They probably seem like opposites, but I'm all about opposites and contrast!

WAMH is super cute but with an adorable horror twist, are you very inspired by horror movies and which type of monster and horror movie is your favourite?

ZOMBIES! I have all these zombie games on my phone, and I do love zombie movies. And at the same time a part of me hates them because of the tension... waiting for them to attack! They are one of the grosser monsters. And vampires, but way before *Twilight*. *Bram Stoker's Dracula* was my favourite movie when I was 10.

If you could collaborate with any other artist out there, no matter their discipline, who would it be and what would you love to make together with them? How would your creation look?

Mark Ryden, *Kukula*, or *Nicoletta Ceccoli* all do wonderful work featuring girls wearing Lolita-esque dresses. *Nicoletta* has one

painting of a girl wearing a dress that is also a birthday cake, with a knife cutting a slice out of it. A photoshoot with a version of that dress would be amazing. *Bei Bad Girl* would be perfect for a print collaboration, but my friend *Saccharine Darling* already wants to do that!

Do you have a piece of advice for aspiring designers out there?

Start small. Make a few things for yourself and see what people think of them. Get help where ever you can. If you decide to take it seriously as a business, you will need to be the illustrator/print designer, pattern maker, promoter, machinist/sample maker, and graphic designer in addition to needing to know about business things such as taxes and proper record keeping. It's a lot (almost too much) for one person, so see if you can partner up with anyone close to you to take some of it off your shoulders.

Could you tell us a little more about your next collection and your plans for the label in 2013?

I can tell you that I will be introducing more casual wear using my prints! I may move away from strictly Lolita designs to simpler dresses that can be co-orded for Lolita. I haven't decided quite yet, but it's something that I've had to consider because Lolita just costs too much to produce here in Australia. I'd also really love to introduce a range of tights to the product line, which I've been looking into for a while. As for the next collection: I can't say much, but I am really excited about it, and I have an epic photo shoot and styling in mind. I will probably take some time off in January to focus on designing for it.

Official site: www.wereallmadhere.co

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photos by We're All Mad Here.



FAVOURERED FILMOGRAPHY

In this section of members of the Belgian Cupcakes take the time to talk about their personal favourites of Japanese cinema and television.

Reviews by Hilde Heyvaert, Ish and Valerie Vliegen



Bunraku

Country of origin: US
Director: Guy Moshe
Starring: Gackt, Josh Hartnett, Demi Moore, Woody Harrelson, Kevin McKidd and Ron Perlman
Year of release: 2010

Bunraku is one of those "East meets West" more art house inclined Hollywood releases we've seen steadily pop up the past decades. Contrary to most of these movies, this one is actually something well recommended to watch yourself if you haven't already. They've clearly done their best to be not only respectful to Japanese culture, but also to portray it to the best of their possibilities, whether it be in the combat scenes, architecture or garments and use of the language. Unlike some Tinseltown fiascos from the quite recent past (The Last Samurai anyone?).

Set in our world in a far future, wars have torn up humanity so thoroughly that the gun has been outlawed and the way and will of the sword (and other melee weapons) has returned.

In the land "East of the Atlantic" a crime lord called *Nicola the Woodcutter* (Ron Pearlman), has been ruthlessly crushing his opponents for decades, leaving a trail of blood, bodies and broken people in his wake, aided by his 9 Killers and an army of henchmen dressed in red suits reminiscent of the gangsters from the 1920s (also the preferred garb of his right hand man: *Killer number two* [Kevin McKidd]). Of course, there's always someone to stand up against a tyrant, someone with vengeance on the mind.

Enter *The Drifter* (Josh Hartnett), who's path crosses with *Yoshi* (Gackt): a samurai sent to retrieve his Clan's medallion. Due to a series of unforeseen events they acquire a mentor, faithful ally and pourer of strong liquor in *The Bartender* (Woody Harrelson) and set off to complete their goal: the long overdue demise of the bad guy.

Whilst Bunraku's plot sounds like a cliché action movie, it is definitely right up there with more avant-garde ways of storytelling like we've seen the past couple of years in films such as *Sin City*, *300* and *The Spirit* (to name but a few), but yet this one is still different due to the masterful use of puppet theatre like decors, with which they give a respectful nod to the *Bunraku puppet theatre* founded in Osaka in 1684), origami, collage and pop-up like art in the storytelling throughout the story. A story very well told I add.

Aside from it being beautifully filmed making it a feast on the eyes, the plot unfolds marvellously and the characters actually develop whilst going after their goal, which makes it very refreshing from what we often see in contemporary cinema. The martial arts scenes, and the use of different fighting styles, are very well executed, and the different styles of portraying the fights combined definitely keep it interesting to watch and not another violence-for-violence sake type of action movie where the heroes go off in the night to slay the bad guy and set the people free.

It's a motley crew of a cast, all brilliantly played by the actors chosen for the particular part, but in the character that will stick with me most is The Bartender, who plays an instrumental part in the unfolding of the plot and the development of both main characters The Drifter and Yoshi.



Ichi the Killer

Country of origin: Japan
Director: Takashi Miike
Starring: Tadanobu Asano, Shinya Tsukamoto, Nao Omori and Alien Sun
Year of release: 2001

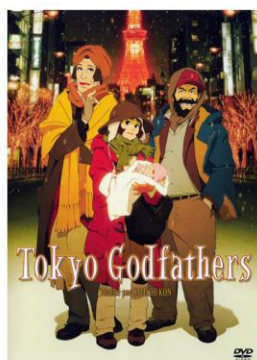
First and foremost, this is a *Takashi Miike* film, who's movies range from violent and bizarre to dramatic and family-friendly. And whilst this movie isn't out there like e.g. his infamous *Visitor Q*, it definitely has some serious WTF moments. And absolutely qualifies as violent and bizarre. But mostly just violent, very, VERY violent. Trust me, there's a reason that several countries banned this one for being too violent and cruel and very much not family friendly. Consider yourself warned.

Thankfully Belgium is not one of these ban countries (I'm actually not sure whether any European country is, but admittedly I didn't really check) and if you like to get your gore on, you'll probably really enjoy *Ichi the Killer*.

Now what's this story about, other than what we can obviously deduct from the title: that it's about a dude called Ichi who is a killer?

A Yakuza crime lord gets himself and a prostitute butchered, the bodies disappear and the clans are standing on their heads, pointing fingers and laying blame. Enter *Kakihara*, the brutal and more than a little twisted enforcer of the now deceased boss, who will go to great lengths to figure out what exactly transpired, killing and maiming a fair share of people whilst at it. How Ichi fits into all of this you'll have to see for yourself because otherwise there'd be too many spoilers to the plot. And yes, there actually is a plot. Covered in blood, gore and bodyparts, but a plot nonetheless.

If you like movies with a lot of blood, gore and what the fuckery then you'll probably appreciate this one. If it's not your cup of tea, avoid it like the proverbial plague.



Tokyo Godfathers
(東京ゴッドファーザーズ
Tōkyō Goddofāzāzu)
Country of origin: Japan
Director: Satoshi Kon
Year of release: 2003

Tokyo Godfathers tells the story of 3 homeless friends, an alcoholic middle-aged man named *Gin*; *Hana*, a gay ex-cabaret waitress and *Miyuki*, a runaway girl. In the middle of a fight they find an abandoned baby, left out in a garbage place. Leaving the idea of the police to the side, they see no other choice but to care for the child and bring it back safely to its real parents themselves.

This goal sets them on a turbulent journey throughout Tokyo. It's a simple story with several strong themes. *Satoshi Kon* shows us a world invisible for the regular eye, the world of the homeless people. Every one of them with their own background story. They all have many problems of their own, trying to deal with them. They have something to learn and are trying to conquer those problems for which they need will power.

This film shows us how people are connected with each other through faith and coincidence. *Tokyo Godfathers* is drawn in a quite realistic style which sometimes uses anime-style facial expressions in some scenes. As for background music, you can hear *Beethoven's "Symphony No. 9"* quite a lot. It's a piece written about highlighting hope and the brotherhood of all humanity. Perfect for this story.

The setting in which the film takes place isn't randomly chosen either. Christmas is a time for hope and self-reflection, a lead up to becoming new and better people at the start of a new year. In short, if you're alone or with family and want to watch a good movie, please watch *Tokyo Godfathers*, It's a perfect film to get in the Christmas mood.



Vampire Girl vs Frankenstein Girl

(吸血少女対少女フランケン)

Kyūketsu Shōjo tai Shōjo Furanken)

Country of origin: Japan

Directors: Yoshihiro Nishimura and Naoyuki Tomomatsu

Starring: Yukie Kawamura, Eri Otoguro and Takumi Saito

Year of release: 2009

A typical Japanese gore movie starring supernatural monsters and events. The plot is simple: two girls fight over a guy, *Mizushima*, with no regard for that guy's feelings on the matter or either one of them.

One of these girls, *Monami*, so happens to be a vampire, the other, *Keiko*, the fashionable A-list daughter of the principal, who is also the science teacher and a bonafide mad scientist in his spare time, being aided and abetted by the school nurse. Obviously they experiment with students and of course they get their mitts on Monami's blood, resulting in all kinds of stuff that should not be.

When Keiko finds her untimely demise after yet another fight over Mizushima, daddy dearest fixes her right up into proper *Frankenstein's* creation type monster and the girls continue to deck it out.

With the screen practically colouring red with fake blood and ditto body parts in the mean while. This is violence for the sake of violence and monsters because well, monsters are popular. And of course both of those things are completely and utterly superior to the plot. Actually the plot is just that thing necessary to accomodate excuses for more gore and more bloody (literally so) monster madness to ensue on a very regular basis.



JANUARY

BRAIN DEATH ZOMBIE
and Umez live

Date: 12

Venue: The Pipeline

City: London

Country: UK

Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/134950293326546>

Belgian Cupcakes

J-fashion meet

Date: 20

City: Antwerp

Country: Belgium

Info: <http://belgiancupcakes.proboards.com> (meetings topic)

Elysium Nights – Dark Fairytale
in the Haunted Grotto

Date: 26

Venue: Em Silo Restaurant

City: Pulheim (near Cologne)

Country: Germany

Tickets: www.nataliaefay.com/events/tickets

Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/142770165872105/?ref=ts&fref=ts#!/events/142770165872105>

FEBRUARY

DJ Krush

Date: 1

Venue: The Forum

City: London

Country: UK

Japan Underground ft. DISCYU

Date: 2

Venue: Namco Station

City: London

Country: UK

Info: <http://japanunderground.wordpress.com>

Gunji the fool x ADAPTER -

Digital Brothers European Tour

2: Bar Live 301, Roubaix, France

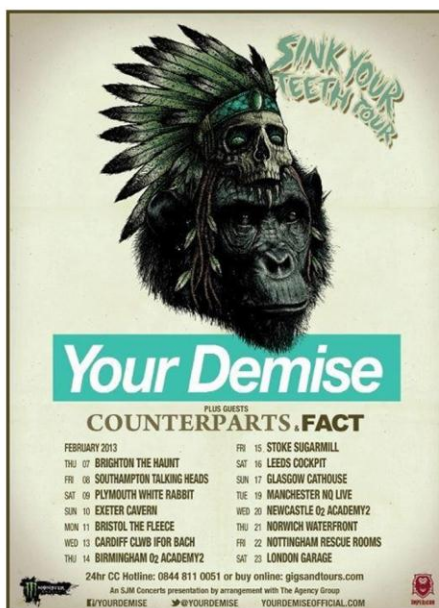
3: Le Klub, Paris, France

14: P60, Amstelveen,

The Netherlands

Tickets & info:

www.ramen-events.com



Kyary Pamyu Pamyu's World Tour

9: VK, Molenbeek, Belgium

10: La Cigale, Paris, France

Tickets: www.soundlicious.com

13: O2 Academy Islington,

London, UK

Tickets:

www.o2academyislington.co.uk

Tsunacon

Date: 10

Venue: Erasmus Expo &

Congrescentrum

City: Rotterdam

Country: The Netherlands

Tickets & info: www.tsunacon.nl

Midlands MCM Expo

Date: 16

Venue: International Centre

City: Telford

Country: UK

Tickets & info:

www.midlandsmcmexpo.com

THE MICROHEAD4N'S

European tour

16: Relax, Moscow, Russia

17: Gloria, Helsinki, Finland

19: Logo, Hamburg, Germany

22: Crystal Club, Berlin, Germany

23: Firlej, Wroclaw, Poland

24: Werkstatt, Cologne, Germany

26: Feierwerk, Munich, Germany

27: Theatre Club, Milan, Italy

Tickets & info: www.b7klan.com

Phantasium

Date: 22 & 23

Venue: Beursgebouw

City: Eindhoven

Country: The Netherlands

Tickets & info: www.phantasium.nl

MARCH

THE MICROHEAD4N'S

European tour

1: Tivoli, Utrecht, The Netherlands

2: Underworld, London, UK

3: Le Divan du Monde, Paris,

France

Tickets & info: www.b7klan.com

Orochi EU Tour

Winners of the Râmen Events x JAIME

WIN A EUROPEAN TOUR CONTEST

Date: March 1 – April 1

Further info TBA

www.ramen-events.com

Irasshai 3

Date: 2

What: Japanese movie event

Venue: CC Rix Deurne

City: Deurne

Country: Belgium

Further info TBA

www.nipponzasshi.be

Made in Asia 5

Date: 8-10

Venue: Brussels Expo – Palais 5

City: Brussels

Country: Belgium

Tickets & info:

www.madeinasia.be

illion (Yojiro Noda of RADWIMPS'
solo project)

Date: 16

Venue: Shepherd's Bush Empire

City: London

Country: UK

Birmingham MCM Expo

Date: 16 – 17

Venue: The NEC

City: Birmingham

Country: UK

Tickets & info:

www.birminghamcomiccon.com

Gala Nocturna:

The Pope's Daughter

Date: 30

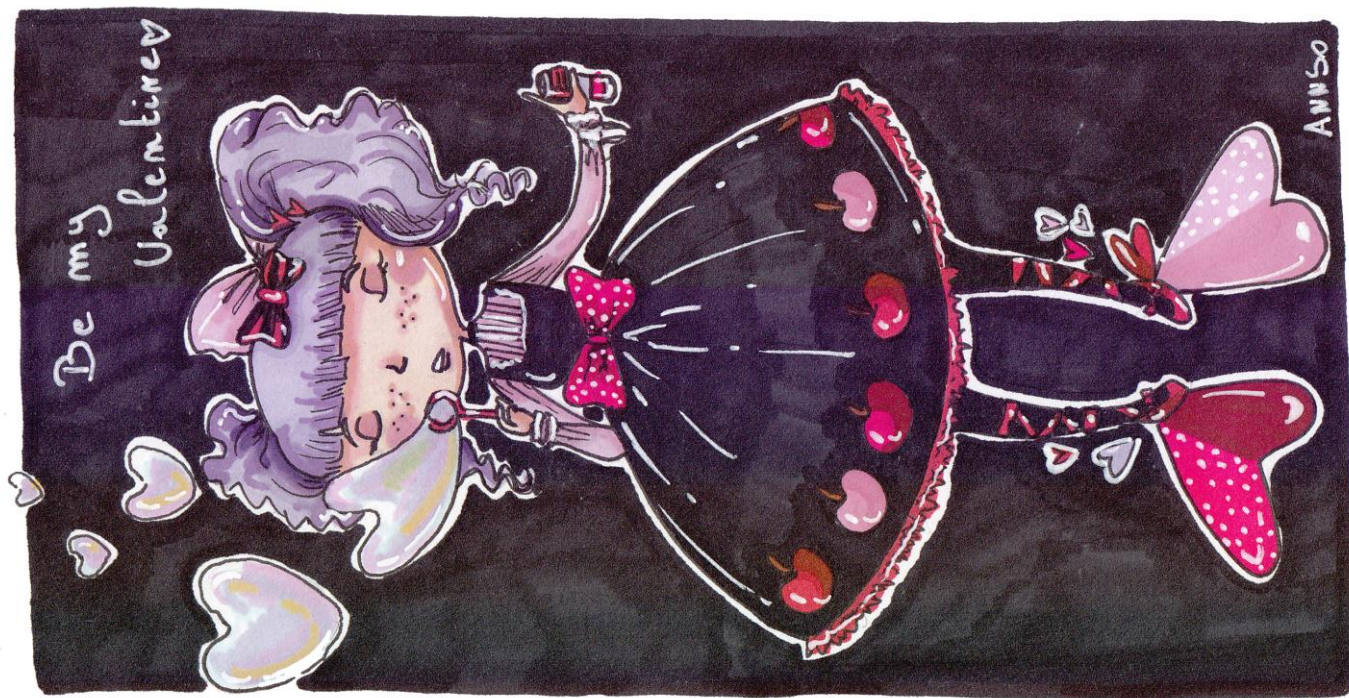
Venue: Augustinus Church

City: Antwerp

Country: Belgium

Tickets & info:

www.gala-nocturna.com



SUBMISSION RULES

1. Commitment.

When you agree to do something for the magazine, please commit and actually DO it. There's nothing as annoying as people that agree to do something and then don't. Especially right before deadline. Yes people can become ill and life may get in the middle, but the deadline is announced well beforehand and there's really no need to wait 'till the very last moment to submit an article. Generally there is a lot of time for people to submit their pieces. I edit something as soon as I get a piece in, just to make sure that I can get everything done in time and health and life can only provide minimal disturbance. So you're actually doing me a favour by submitting as soon as possible/before deadline.

If someone doesn't submit to an edition without a valid reason or explanation, I reserve the right to set an earlier deadline for the person that hasn't submitted before whilst they committed, to make sure that we get the article in the next magazine they wish to cooperate on. I'm not doing this to hurt feelings or step on toes, but I don't want to give people the opportunity to hijack the magazine (with or without malicious intent). That sounds harsh, I agree, but in my personal experience some people systematically volunteer and never deliver, thus excluding others from the opportunity to submit and keeping the magazine from getting said piece in. It's exactly that I'm trying to avoid by putting rules like these in place.

Being chief editor isn't just all the fun and good times, it is a lot of hard work and sometimes I will have to make harsh decisions and this is one of them. I'm sorry if this upsets someone, that's not my intention, I'm trying to do right by the magazine and especially the people that genuinely want to contribute and our readers.

2. Deadlines

Stick to the deadline. They are announced well in time. You can not only find it right here, but also on the very last page of the magazine. It's easy to find the deadline when you forget when it is.

The deadline for issue 11 is **Sunday, February 24**.

Submissions not in my inbox when I turn on my computer the morning of the 25th of February will not appear in the magazine. Plain and simple as that. Respect the deadline people!

The reason behind this is simple: not only does everyone have ample time to meet the deadline; from experience I know that extending it means that the magazine is likely never to happen.

Also: editing takes a lot of work, so if I want to release in a timely manner after the deadline I can't wait for articles 'till Hell freezes over.

3. Submitting

All entries for the magazine must be submitted by email on hilde.heyvaert@gmail.com

That is also the address where you can reach me with questions, remarks etc etc etc.

If you have an idea for the next edition, don't hesitate to let me know!

When you submit artwork or photos, they must be at least 2000 pixels and jpg files.

(e.g. a photo of 1333 x 2000 or 1500 x 2000 works fine, everything larger too, everything smaller may become problematic at final edit). Files that are too small are no use to me so please take that into account.

Also, be mindful of quality, I cannot stress this enough!

ONLY submit pieces you have the right to submit. If someone complains about copyright infringement over a piece you've submitted I will send these people to you. This is YOUR responsibility and you will be held accountable in an infringement case.

As far as the **spelling** is concerned, we do NOT allow text speech, texts written like you speak or things filled with purposefully bad spelling. Everyone makes mistakes and that's not an issue, hopefully those mistakes will be caught during the proofreading (not everything gets caught though; we're all only human after all).

That aside, everyone can operate a spell check I'm sure, please do that before submitting an article. It gets rid of the more obvious mistakes and makes life easier for proof readers and editor alike. It's just a matter of common courtesy.

About **photography and art**: I am aware that not everyone is equally talented. It is in no way so that one needs to have some kind of art degree to be allowed to submit to the magazine. We may not expect a degree, but we do, however, expect a certain quality. It doesn't matter that you don't have professional materials, just do your very best to submit things that are presentable.

ANTWERP^{#3}

CONVENTION

SUNDAY **APRIL 28th** 2013

One day of

SCI-FI

FANTASY
&
HORROR

6000 m² of
books
manga
comics
games
toys
cosplay
movies

and much more

ALL NEW

GAMING ROOMS!
SPECIAL GUESTS!
LASERSHOOTING!

10h00 - 18h00

ANTWERP EXPO

More info: antwerpconvention.be

JAN VAN RIJSWIJCKLAAN 191
2020 ANTWERPEN • BELGIUM

www.facebook.com/antwerp.convention

NEXT EDITION

Our next edition will be BCM nr 11,
spanning the months
March and April 2013.

Fashion

Style Spotlight: Steampunk (in Japan)
Steampunk fashion feature
Interview with Lora Elly
Interview with Steampunk (Lolita) Extraordinaire
AylaLeona de Loryva
Interview with Pixie Bunny

J-Music Corner

CD reviews
Concert reviews
Interviews with
Strange Artifact
Muddy Apes
Synk;yet
Kiwamu Kai

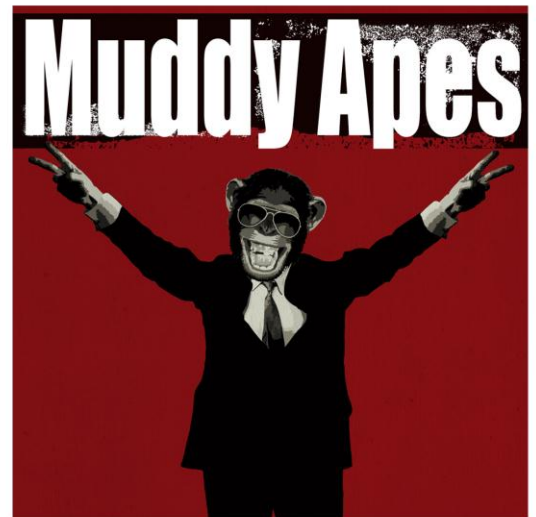
And if all goes well one with Golden Bomber and
THE MICRO HEAD4N'S too!

Lifestyle

Event reviews
Belgian Cupcakes Lolita fashion meets:
January & February
Elysium Nights
Interview with Brian Kesinger
A Belgian's Adventure in Japan
And much, much more!

And more...

St-Patrick's Day greeting card with art by Annso
Exclusive art by Selina Davison!
Favoured Cinematography: a Studio Ghibli special and more!





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THE GAZETTE

